THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) In view of (a) above, question does not arise.

Private sector participation in education sector

*154. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to evolve an appropriate policy-framework, to facilitate greater private sector participation in the education sector-both in schools and universities-and also to encourage top-class foreign universities and institutions to set up collaborative institutions in the country, through public and private partnerships, and offer degrees and diplomas of same quality and standards of education, as in their own countries;

(b) if so, what were the other decisions taken; and

(c) by when they are likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) to (c) There is currently no bar to private participation in the Education sector. The National Policy on Education, 1986 (as modified in 1992) encourages non-governmental and voluntary effort in Education, while preventing the establishment of institutions which intend to commercialize Education. The National Policy on Education, 1986 (as modified in 1992) envisages that "in the interest of maintaining standards and for several other valid reasons, the commercialization of technical and professional education will be curbed. An alternative system will be devised to involve private and voluntary effort in this sector of Education, in conformity with accepted norms and goals". There is already private investment in all sectors of education and the share of such private investment is progressively growing, starting from Primary to Higher and Technical Education.

As part of the Government's commitment to the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) to ensure that all Institutions of Higher Learning and professional education retain their autonomy, Universities are permitted to collaborate and enter into appropriate Memoranda of Understanding with foreign Universities/Institutions. The All India Council for Technical Education has detailed regulations for entry and operation of Foreign Universities/Institutions for imparting Technical Education in India. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Education has been allowed since February, 2000 under the automatic route, without any sectoral cap.

Allotment of small mining blocks

*155. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether allotment of small mining blocks is not conducive to economies of scale of production, and is not, therefore viable;

(b) if so, the steps being taken to discourage small mining blocks;

(c) whether allotment of small mining blocks is not productive in view of use of low cost technologies of excavating minerals leading to lower mineral realization; and